

DIABLO VALLEY ATARI NEWSLETTER COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

October 1987

RETURN ADDRESS
DACE
3602 DUMBARTON ST.
CONCORD, CA 94519

To :

S.L.C.C.
P.O. BOX 1506
SAN LEANDRO CA 94577



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

OFFICERS

- President - Mark Butler
757-0173
- Co- Vice - Rick Graham
Presidents 757-2193
- Bob Pankhurst
228-5761
- Secretary - BIG Mike Randis
Newsletter 798-6565
- Treasurer - Ken Zahora
930-9739
- BBS - (415) 827-9014

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next three meetings of **DACE** will be held at the **Contra Costa Water Building** located at **1331 Concord Ave.** in Concord

Thursday - Oct 1st - 7 PM
Thursday - Nov 5th - 7 PM
Thursday - Dec 3rd - 7 PM

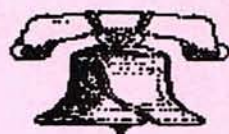
October Meeting Topic

8-bit and ST disk of the month. 8-bit and ST software raffle. DACE group buy on 5 1/4 inch blank disks 10 for \$3.00 w/sleeves. ST software demos. Your questions answered. Discussion of beginners SIG ... And MORE !!!



PRESIDENTS PAGE

by
Mark Butler



Well here I am, re-elected for another term. I want to thank all of you who elected me. (Actually I want to thank all of you who didn't bother to run against me so I was elected by default.) Being involved in a club like DACE has been a lot of fun for me. I have always liked playing around with computers but it seemed like I was existing in a vacuum. I didn't know anyone who was as interested as myself and typing in programs from magazines was too much work so I just did my own thing.

Then when I discovered DACE it was like a whole new world. Good Public Domain software could be had already set up on a disk for a song. Professional software was demoed and reviewed and raffled, and there were people who shared the same interest as myself.

Last year when I agreed to become president it was a little scary. After all I had never done something like that and I was not very confident that I could run the club at the same high quality as it traditionally has enjoyed. Also last year was a time of transition. The club went from 8-bit only to all Atari computers. We found it increasingly difficult to find speakers. Fortunately the club received an infusion of money allowing us to experiment with some different types of activities, most of which were successful.

I feel good about what DACE has done in the past year and I want to assure you that we will continue to do the best that we can. We have several exciting things planned for the future and you will be informed of them as they approach.

Meanwhile DACE needs you! So far most of the people have renewed their membership. While you are certainly welcome to come to the meetings as a non-member we would appreciate your membership. The fee is minimal and is used to finance the newsletter, DOM's and raffles. It makes it very difficult to call a software company and ask them if they would like to come out and show off their product when they ask how many members we have and I have to say something like "less than 30". Nuff said!

You may not be aware of everything that goes on behind the scenes at DACE but I am sure you are aware that the creation of a Disk of the Month requires some work. Typically we are running around at the last minute trying to scare up enough programs to fill them, write custom intros and menus and get enough copied for the meeting. As is inevitable in situations like these, errors creep in. There are 2 basic types of errors; Those beyond our control and those within our control.

Errors beyond our control are any that may be in a program we obtain from someone else. Last month the digitized sound player was a good example. It works most of the time but sometimes it refuses to run. Attempting to debug someone else's program is a real nightmare and it works most of the time. If you have problems getting it to run try hitting reset and typing RUN again. It always worked for me.

Errors we can control are ones that creep into the programs that DACE creates or modifies. While there is no excuse for these I hope you will understand that everyone is human. Last month we had one of these also. There was an error in the menu program which prevented the loading of the Lunar Lander game. When selected it would give a ERROR 170 in line 10010.

There was nothing wrong with the game, just the menu program. Below I will explain how to fix it. If you like you can exchange your disk for a corrected one at the next meeting.

Boot the disk and hit reset when you are at the menu type in:

```
300 IF A=67 THEN FN$="D:LANDER.BAS":GOTO 11000
```

This will correct the menu program. Now you must unlock the file so you can save the new one.

Type: XIO 36,#1,0,0,"D:MENU.BAS"

Now you can save the corrected program.

Type: SAVE "D:MENU.BAS"

The menu program should now be correct. I would like to point out that if we had more people working on the disk of the month we could test them further.

If you missed the last meeting - shame on you. We had a lot of fun, officer elections went smoothly, and we demoed (and raffled) Ace of Aces for the 800XL. It is a excellent bomber simulation with multiple screens for the various people and stations on the plane. Rumor has it that the next meeting is going to be a doozy, I would plan on going.

One last note. I had several people come to me and talk about SIG's (Special Interest Groups). DACE used to have SIG's but they kind of died for lack of involvement, however DACE makes a good springboard for getting people together informally. If you want to get together with someone about anything; Syncalc, Basic, Word processing, etc. I am going to try and give you the chance to verbalize your desires and get you together with others of similar interests. Also if you are having trouble getting started with your Atari or just feel like you want a little more understanding of it we can arrange something. Until the meeting ...



THE PHILOSOPHY of a Fast BASIC

DBASIC quips

by Tim Mensch



Before I get started, I want to make it clear that this is NOT a review of DBASIC. I am only relating some of the design flaws of DBASIC that I've noted from reading the manual that I won in last month's DACE 16-bit raffle--thank you, DACE.

DTACK Grounded, Inc., the producers of DBASIC, have engineered DBASIC to be fast, in all respects. It has its own fast disk format, even its own operating system--and is written in raw 68000 code. This makes for a very fast BASIC, but also imposes some major limitations.

First, the disk format is not TOS-compatible. This means that if you have an old ST BASIC program on any standard formatted disk, and you want to convert it to DBASIC, you can either write a program that reads the sectors off your TOS disk one at a time and writes them to your DBASIC disk, (there isn't one included) or you can print it out and type it in. Assuming the program is large, you probably wouldn't want to type it in, and it could be tricky to write a program that finds a file on a disk and ports it to a DBASIC disk...probably too tricky for a beginner.

Of course another option would be to send it over a RS232 or modem connection. This would be fine, except again in their infinite wisdom they decided not to support the RS232 port in their operating system re-write. This is a pitfall of writing an operating system from scratch--it may be faster, but unless it does everything that the slower OS does, the users will end up falling back on the slower, more comprehensive system.

Included on the DBASIC disk is an assembler. Being a 68000 programmer, I immediately saw some real development potential, considering that you couldn't use ANY other available assembler with DBASIC because of file and relocation information incompatibility, my opinion on the usefulness of DBASIC went up. That is, until I read the info on the assembler--when you assemble a file, it prints out the error listing to the printer, with NO way to shut this "feature" off.

Why would they require this? Because "DBASIC is intended to be a serious development environment, and a hard copy listing is essential to this." So a hard copy is essential, though neither a hard disk nor a RAM disk are? --One of the side affects of having its own disk format is hard drive incompatibility; and of course those wonderful reset-proof ramdisks meant for an "inefficient" TOS AUTO folder won't work either.

On the brighter side, the manual does contain all kinds of technical details concerning DBASIC, such as internal variable format, and for us assembly language programmers, what registers you can and can't use, what the ones you can't use do, and where you can put your assembly language routine. Though it may be fine for short, quick programs, anything longer than 50 lines would be a hassle, at best. I believe that DBASIC was meant for developers, though the developers DTACK planned for must have no hard disk, no need for a RAM disk, no need for a good editor (for assembly language), no need to use old, pre-DBASIC ST files, no need for modem support, mouse support, MIDI support, or joystick support... I believe that I've made my point.

NOTE: The other winner of DBASIC at the September meeting, Dan Filner, holds a similar opinion of DBASIC.

(Editors note: since the release of DBASIC in our September raffle there has been an upgrade. DTACK maintains that all known bugs have been fixed and all of the statements in the manual now work. DTACK provides no individual support for DBASIC but gives what they call collective support through their BBS-> 300/1200/2400 baud (605) 989-9578. Future "patches" to DBASIC will be on their BBS. They are currently looking into patches for sound chip support and RS-232 support.)



MARK MY WORDS

by
Mark Hannan



OOOPS! I must apologize for last month's article. I have certainly never claimed to be a great speller, and because of this, I was very reluctant to write articles for the club. This is why I have a spelling checker. After looking at last month's newsletter, I realized that instead of taking the final copy to Big Mike's that, I had run through the spell checker, I had grabbed the backup copy that I had not run through the checker! All I can say is I'm sorry.

So much for the bad news. Now for some good news. I have been corresponding with SubLogic Corporation for quite a few months now. They have been kind enough to donate ST versions of Flight Simulator II, and a ST Scenery disk of part of the South-Eastern U.S. coastline (between Washing DC and Florida). In addition, they kindly donated an 8-bit version of Flight Simulator, and an 8-bit Scenery disk of San Francisco & the Bay Area! This was extremely gracious of them, and shows just what a class-act SubLogic is.

For those who are not aware of SubLogic, they make about the most extensive Flight Simulator for any home computer! We will be writing a review of both versions, and demonstrating them at our meetings. We will then raffle them off to the members!

The club has just purchased some more great items for the upcoming 8 and 16-bit raffles. Some of these are: "Barbarian" (one of the most detailed action packed graphic adventures you will see on the ST), 8 and 16-bit versions of Infocom's "Lurking Horror" (the newest text adventure game from the people who brought you the "Zork" series). We also have a ST version of "Space Quest", "Skyfox", and much more. Our upcoming raffles should be pretty good.

We are also trying to purchase one of those scanning digitizers that you put on your printer, and can scan in a picture into your computer (it comes out monochrome). The resulting pictures have almost the quality of a Xerox! We will probably be raffling this off for the December meeting.

Big Mike mentioned to me that, on the DACE BBS, some people had asked for a beginner's SIG (Special Interest Group) for 8-bit and ST. This would be a separate get together, (not already included at the DACE meetings). It would be held at someone's house for some actual "hands-on" and questions and answers, for the people who do not know much about Atari computers. What do

you think? Would you attend something like this? Please tell the board at the next meeting if you would go to one of these (or call Big Mike).

We had elections last meeting. Essentially the same board was re-elected (mainly because no one else volunteered for a position). The only exception was my cushy spot as Vice President. I decided not to run again this year, so both Rick Graham, and Bob Pankhurst decided they were interested in the job. The club decided it would use all the help it could get, so elected both people as Co-Vice presidents. If you will remember last year started out like this with both Steve Roquemore and myself being elected. It was working out well, until Steve got a job offer back east and moved away. I'm sure it will also work out well this year.

Do not forget to renew your membership (or join if you are new). The membership makes it possible for you to get this newsletter every month, helps purchase items for the raffle, along with equipment for the club, and discounts on raffle tickets and disks of the month. This year, for joining you will also get a great Atari Mug! There is a limited supply of these (first come, first serve) so get your renewal in early. You can send it in with the form printed in last month's newsletter (I do not know at the time of this writing if one will be included in this present issue). You can also renew at the next meeting. Either way, get your membership in right away!

I think this has been a pretty good year for our club. The board has tried to be innovative, progressive, and make the club grow in any way we could think of. I would like to thank the other board members for the great job they have done, and I think the club is in a little better shape now, than last year at this time. If you will remember last year at this time, they were talking of disbanding the club because they couldn't get anyone to run for an office. Since that time we have worked at the two Atari Fairs that were held in our area. These increased the club's treasury significantly, allowing us to purchase a 16-bit ST system, an Epson Printer and publishing partner software for the newsletter, and start a BBS. We now support all Atari Computers (not just the 8-bit), and now have both 8-bit and 16-bit disks of the month. We have demonstrated and raffled off some terrific software, and hardware, and had a great time at the Computer Air Hockey championship. I look forward to another great year, and I hope you also enjoy it.

(continued)



SUPERWIZZBANG PLUS

by
Mark Butler



This is the saga of the new version of SuperWizzbang Plus. Sit back and see if any of this sounds familiar.

John has been eagerly awaiting version 2 of SuperWizzbang Plus ever since he saw the large 2 page ads in all the magazines. Version 2 could do everything he could do now and included over 712 new features. It was a total package with a better spreadsheet, database, word processor, calendar, notepad, desktop publisher, phone dialer, etc. than ever before.

A few weeks after the ads ran he got a letter from the company telling him that there was a special offer for owners of version 1. He could upgrade to version 2 for a measly \$199. He mailed off a check and his old disk that same day. He never bothered to make a backup disk until his new version arrived, the ad said that they were already shipping advance copies to old customers.

After waiting 3-1/2 months John got his new disks. By now he was frantic, having been without for all this time. He tore open the package, read the quick install card which just said "Boot the installation disk" and did so.

Absolutely nothing happened. John decided to try the 298 page installation manual. It said that version 2 has been re-designed to take advantage of color monitors. Checking further he discovered that version 1 did not care what monitor you had but version 2 required a color monitor. John decided that he needed a color monitor anyway so he went out and purchased one.

Back at his 520ST, John booted the installation disk and watched the glorious color intro start up. He tells it he wants to install the software on his hard disk, and begins the disk swapping procedure. Why can't I use my second drive he wonders.

After 39 disk swaps, it informs him that it is ready to install his printer driver. It display a list of 137 printers and tells him to select his. That's strange, thinks John: Version 1 supported my old Slowpoke-100 printer but I don't see it on the list. Checking the manual again he cannot find anything to help, but it does say to display the READ.ME file for the latest update information.

Re-booting, John finds the READ.ME file on disk 18. It tells him that "Certain printers that were available in previous releases are no longer supported. If your printer is unlisted, select one that is similar or use the GENERIC printer. Be warned that the GENERIC printer driver does not support 93% of available printer options."

Starting up the install procedure again, John is dismayed to see a "INSTALL FAILURE" error and then the system hang with 7 bombs. Back at the manual he finally spots a small sentence that tells him the installation procedure assumes that there is no old version on his disk. Re-booting and checking his hard disk, John deletes the partially installed SuperWizzbang Plus, and started it up again.

This time everything goes fine, John selects the Slowpoke-200 which he is sure must be compatible with his Slowpoke-100. After inserting disk 18 John sees the enlightening message "DISK FULL" and 13 bombs. Re-booting John discovers that although he had plenty of room on his hard disk before now he has only 6 bytes free. The manual informs him that although version 1 fit on a 360k disk, version 2 requires 2.5 megabytes of his hard disk. "Well it needed some cleaning up anyway" John thought as he removed some old NEO pictures. He also remembered to delete the partially installed folder before re-starting the install procedure.

This time the install finishes without a hitch. Excited now John clicks open the SUPWIZZ2 folder and activates SUPWIZZ2.PRG. Suddenly a dialog box comes up informing him that the system cannot read drive A. John is dumbfounded. Back to the manual: John discovers that although version 1 was not copy protected, version 2 has so many new features that it is copy protected. He must now insert the key disk in drive A whenever he wants to use SuperWizzbang Plus. Inserting the disk, John activates SUPWIZZ2.PRG, watches in amazement as his drive A light comes on and horrible snarking sounds issue forth. Finally the drive light goes out and he looks back at the screen. "NOT ENOUGH MEMORY" and 12 bombs greet him.

(continued)

Wizzbang ... (continued)

"Huh?", the old version ran ok on his 520ST. The manual clearly stated on page 85 that version 2 required 1 megabyte. "Well I always wanted 1 meg anyway" John thought. He took his 520ST to his friendly local user group and had it upgraded to 1 meg.

Back at the keyboard, John boots with increasing excitement. Although the install has been a bit rocky (and more expensive than he originally thought) he is sure that it will all go smoothly now. He starts it up, the drives whir and the screen display 14 bombs. After paging through the install manual he comes upon a Xeroxed addendum tucked in the back. It informs him that SuperWizzbang Plus version 2 will not allow any desktop accessories. "AHA" thinks John, since version 2 will do everything my 5 desktop accessories do anyway I don't need them. He removes the 5 .ACC files from his hard disk and re-boots.

Next time - John discovers what its like running version 2.

Mark My Words ... (continued)

And now some bad news (or good news, depending on your outlook). This will probably be my last regular monthly article for a while. I may write an occasional monthly article, or review of some software that happens to come my way. This has been a pretty full year for me and i only get to do a small fraction of home computing as i would like. I have several irons in the fire at the moment. I do not have the time to perform the kind of job I would like to accomplish for the club. I did not receive much feedback on my monthly articles, and reviews, so I do not know if you liked them or not. I hope I have added a little to your computer life, and possibly brought a smile or two while doing it. So jsut remember, "Keep On Atarian !"

5 1/4 inch DISKS

10 for \$3.00

come to the next meeting and get in on the blank disk buy w/ sleeves.

DACE GRAPHICS CONTEST

There are 3 catagories for both the 8-bit and the ST:

- 1) Still Pictures -> Drawn with any program i.e. Degas, Neo, Koala Pad, Rambrant etc.
- 2) Animation -> animation sequences created with any animation program
- 3) Programmed Graphics -> Created with any programming language

PRIZES!

THAT'S RIGHT!!! DACE IS SPONSORING ANOTHER CONTEST AND HERE ARE THE RULES:

- 1) All GRAPHICS MUST BE ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART. NO DIGITIZING AND MUST BE PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED MATERIAL.
- 2) ONLY ONE ENTRY PER CATAGORY... YES IF YOU HAVE A 8-BIT AND A ST YOU CAN ENTER 6 TIMES ONCE FOR EACH I.E. STILLS, ANIMATION, PROGRAMMING.
- 3) All submissions will be REALESED INTO THE public domain.
- 4) YOU MUST BE A DACE MEMBER TO PARTICIPATE.
- 5) DEADLINE FOR YOUR ENTRY IS THE JANUARY MEETING. All submissions MUST BE ON disk AND 8-BIT USERS MUST USE DOS 2.0 FORMAT.

**DON'T DELAY!
CREATE YOUR
MASTERPIECE
TODAY!**

YOUR HOME OFFICE

a 8-bit review by
Ken Campbell

This integrated Word Processor and Spreadsheet in a single disk was one of the 8 bit raffle items at the august DACE meeting. Mark Butler asked me to write a review for the newsletter. I have had only a little experience with the 800XL so I decided to try out this program.

The first thing noted was that the disk was originally for the commodore 64 with the Atari connection being made with a sticker on the documentation cover. There was also a reference to the unnumbered pages of addendum for the Atari commands spaced throughout the instructions. (I am writing my review using my Atariwriter + program because I could not find the print commands for the Atari**or I at least did not see them if they are there.) For example, the text says "press the f1 key" which for the Atari means pressing the Control + C keys. That isn't too hard to remember, but ...

There are many, many more substitutions to be found. I started into the Word Processing section and attempted to do the example given in the text. I typed the sample paragraphs and started correcting the typos. Several corrections were made, then somehow i deleted a whole line of text. I could not recover the text and finally gave up rather frustrated. About here I found Commodore commands but could not find the Atari commands if they were there. I have a feeling that someone with a better working knowledge of the Atari could overcome this problem. For myself, I don't want to try again even though Control + H brought three and a half screens of commands for the Atari which should be useful.

Another caution concerns the claim in the introduction that the Word Processing and Spreadsheet functions are fully integrated, in that you can go from one program to the other with both in memory and that you can view the financial data in one window and write about it in another window. Sounds real good, but, you soon learn that since the Atari has less memory than the C-64, it is not possible for both programs to reside in memory at the same time in the Atari.

This might be a good program for someone needing a Spreadsheet and who can translate "Commodore 64" into "Atari".



USING MY ST

by
Steve Valerga

Most people I talk to think that because I own an Atari 1040ST that I must play a lot of games. Well, I could justifiably be accused of playing a game or two. But, I am typical of most PC owners. I use my ST mostly for word processing. I do most of my business letters on my ST using First Word. I find it easier to compose a good letter when I can see exactly what it is going to look like. In fact one of the first things I did when I brought my ST home was to type a school paper for a daughter of a friend.

Another use of the First Word package is to maintain a daily dairy. Maintaining a dairy is important in my job as a sales representative for a CAD/CAM company. I deal with many accounts so record keeping is important. With the "FIND" function I can sort through my dairy and find references to dates, persons or specific subjects.

First Word can also be used as an on line personal card file where you can store names, addresses and phone numbers. Again, the find function is very useful for locating information quickly. The multi-window capability of the ST and First Word make it easy to move names and addresses directly over to letters that I might be writing. When condensing notes and working on the daily dairy, I can have my phone list open in another window. That way I can just pause from creating my dairy activity and enter the name and phone number in the phone list, then quickly return to the dairy.

I also have the "Graphic Artist" package. I find that particularly useful for creating presentation documents such as account plans and sales forecasts. It has excellent text and graph making capabilities. I still haven't mastered all of its capabilities. I am certain that I will find more uses for it once I do master it.

I find my ST with just a few basic application packages to be very useful with just a moderate amount of creativity on my part. I keep browsing in stores and trade magazines to give me ideas on other useful things I can do with my ST. Now I am going to hyperwarp back to my galactic map and blast the Zycroid fleet into oblivion.



QUIZ MASTER CONSTRUCTION SET - ST

a review by BIG MIKE

Our own Jan Iverson of EZuse Software has done it again. Quiz Master Construction Set is now available for the ST. Written in GFA BASIC and compiled with the GFA BASIC Compiler, Quiz Master does everything the 8-bit version did and more.

The Quiz Master package comes with a single NOT copy-protected disk and a clearly detailed pamphlet of instructions (done with Publishing Partner I might add). The program will only run on a color monitor in medium resolution.

Quiz Master is a unique product that allows the user to create their own set of questions and answers in quiz format with the editor included in the program. Up to 1000 questions with answers can be saved in a data file on a disk which when loaded will reside entirely in the ST's memory. Once you have established your quiz data, it can be dumped to printer in any of the four available formats. Or if you prefer, the your data can be loaded into the Quiz Master game. The game allows up to four players with the option of allowing you to choose whether or not you want to have the correct answer displayed if you or another player selects the incorrect answer.

Quiz Master utilizes the mouse with easy to use drop-down menus and the keyboard for entering and/or editing your own set of quiz data. Included on the disk is a data base entitled COMPUTER.DAT which has 100 computer related questions to get you started. Quiz Master Construction Set is available for both the 8-bit Atari and the ST.

As a bonus, there is another game on the disk called Where Is. This game is a test of concentration. Five Atari symbols will appear at random on any of 36 boxes. You must "find" them again after they disappear. You get 10 points for each correct find. 5 misses and you must start over. Jan has released this game into the public domain. Where Is will appear on our next ST disk of the month and my also be found in the files section for download on our BBS.

At \$9.95 (plus \$1.55 shipping and handling) Quiz Master Construction Set is also a good

value. If you are interested in their other fine products contact EZuse Software for a complete catalog of software titles for both the 8-bit and the ST line of computers. Their address is:

EZuse Software
2850 Ena WAY
Antioch, CA 94509
(415) 754-6026

Quiz Master Construction Set - ST will be available at the next DACE raffle.

DISK of the Month

8-Bit

This months double sided disk contains two programs (yep, one on each side). One side contains the program Golf Pro written by Mike Casaus. Mike has written previous programs for DACE and Golf Pro is another DACE exclusive. Golf Pro is written in BASIC with some MAC 65 machine language routines. It is a complete 18 hole golf course with a driving range playable in either an amateur or professional mode. The other side contains some of the most awesome music and graphic demos ever seen.

ST

This month DACE has 2 ST disks. ST Writer ver. 2.0 with GEM drop down windows. The second disk contains another great game from David Addison (of Monopoly, Solitaire and Tunnel Vision fame) called Cribbage. Jan Iverson's Where Is game, a format all utility that formats 3 1/2 inch disks in Magic Sac, IBM or ST all on your Atari drive. Also included on this disk are some neat keen Accessories.

NEWS FLASH: having problems getting Dollars and Sense to print with your 520 ST? Well it seems that you a meg or greater in order to get the print dump to work with this program.



WHAT I'VE HEARD

by
Uncle Chumley



Well, it seems like eons since your good old Uncle Chumley has written anything for the DACE newsletter but I'm back again in full force. A lot of interesting things have shot by my ears these past few weeks so, since I have your attention, I thought I would share them with you. Of course I make no claim as to the truthfulness or the validity of any of this prattle, but it is what I have heard... Well let's get to it!

A rather captivating list of assumed new 8-bit software titles has crossed my desk of late and I thought I would reprint them for you: Tass Times in Tonetown * Activision, The Movie Monster GAME * Epyx, Ace of Aces * Accolade, Acro-Jet * MicroProse, Bard's Tale II * Electronic Arts, Breakers * Broderbund, Conflict in Vietnam * MicroProse, The Coveted Mirror * Polarware, Destroyer Escort * MicroProse, Electric Dreams * Activision, Fairlight * Mindscape, Gettysburg: The Turning Point * SSI, Gunship * MicroProse, Hacker II: The Domsday Papers * Activision, Marauder * Mastertronic, Murder Party * Electronic Arts, Future-Stat Baseball * subLogic, Scavenger Hunt * Electronic Arts, The Scoop * Telarium/Spinnaker, Spitfire 40 * Avalon Hill, Spy Vs. Spy III * First Star, Thomas M. Disch's Amnesia * Electronic Arts, The Toy Shop * Broderbund, Trinity * Infocom/Activision, World Games * Epyx...and if you don't think that is a mouthful say it fast three times. Who knows if any of these titles will ever come out but, I see Ace of Aces is already in the stores. In fact, DACE raffled off a copy at their last meeting.

And there is also a heap of new software coming out for the ST (but you already knew that, right?)... Well, your Chum has an exclusive scoop on some new software a brewin' over at the Redmersoft Group. Our boys (after all most of them are DACE members) are officially doing a ST (and Amiga) version of Fort Apocalypse. This will be a complete rewrite of the old 8-bit version with many missions.

The first mission follows the original theme of rescuing humans from a fort. Other missions include: killing people, destroying a primary target and defending tankers in the Persian Gulf. Apocalypse is reported to be a multi-player and even multi-computer game and may even employ the use of 3D glasses. There is even a hint of the possible release of other mission disks (purchased separately of course) to play with the game.

Also in the hopper at Redmersoft is a ST original game entitled Ski Or Fry...SOF is a survival type of

game who's scenario goes something like this: You are on the way up the ski slopes when you toss a cigarette out of the car which causes a tree to burn. In the rest of the game you attempt to avoid being killed by a famous Bear as you dodge various obstacles and participate in different events (ala Winter Games) in this humorous journey down the slopes.

And now for the new hardware anyone department... Informed sources tell me that the "new" 8-bit XF551 disk drives are now sitting in you know who's warehouse. This puppy is reported to run about 3 times faster than the old Atari 1050 and will automatically handle single, enhanced (DOS 2.5 for those of you that may be in the dark) and double density disks. There is also a new DOS dubbed "ADOS" which will run on any Atari compatible disk drive. It is my understanding that ADOS still isn't finished so the people buying early versions of the XF551 will get a coupon good for one free copy of the DOS when it is released. There are also some reports of incompatibility problems with ADOS in the older operating systems.

...Get a bike. OOPS. ... More like get a hard drive. I read recently that Michtron (distributor of many fine ST software titles) is offering a hard disk drive to anyone who turns in 3 pirate bulletin board operators. This I believe is being done in order to turn the tide in the war against software piracy. I kinda doubt that anyone will have the "balls" to do this but it may just instill enough fear in the minds of those swashbuckling Sysops to turn legit.

Two weeks later department. . . I have gone beyond blue in the face holding my breath for some long awaited hardware and software titles to be released. Recently, a local retailer called FTL games to inquire as to the status of the long awaited completion of Dungeon Master. FTL stated that they were somewhat premature in showing off their demo of the game over a year ago but the final version is finished and scheduled for distribution in October. I'm also in a dither about the blitter. It seems that the manufacturer can't make these chips fast enough so, all of the blitters are being installed in the new Mega ST machines. If you have an old ST and are drooling over an upgrade, take a number please and stand in line.

Well, I had better end this drivel before I turn into a pumpkin. So, for now this is good ol' Uncle Chumley signing off.



THE OLD SOLDIER

by
Rick Graham



Everyone seems to make noises about eight-bit Ataris being dead or dying, but they just don't seem to die! It's like the old saying "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it." Well I own an ST, so what am I doing writing this article, you may well ask. I'm writing it on an ST also, but only because I couldn't get my wife to write it on the XE. Yes we still have an eight-bit computer in the house, in fact there are two complete systems, with four disk drives. Did I say I like Atari computers or what? Well I finally realized since eight-bit Ataris were dying out anyway (just joking folks), that I would sell off two of my four complete eight-bit Ataris. I mean with five computers and only four people in the house, two of which are age four and seven, it begs the question of whether or not it's possible to have too many computers! So I sold an 800 system, and an 800XL system.

Anyhow, my wife uses the XE every week to write the church bulletin. She spends at least two to three hours a week using the computer and printing out the files on her Gemini 10X. Her system is a hand me down from the days when I did the D.A.C.E. newsletter and a few others. At one time I used the XE to write six monthly newsletters, keep records on thirty people and a monthly audit of forty families. At this point I wished I'd bought a Commodore or Timex as the XE was getting to be a bit too handy. I found myself using it all the time.

Now my wife uses it to do her bulletin, she kept records for about forty people and wrote reports and talks prior to the bulletin. I guess one thing I've always been proud of was watching our youngest daughter (at the time 2 1/2 yrs. old) climb up on a chair turn on the system, insert a disk and boot up a game disk that belonged exclusively for the children. Our children have been around computers as much as the T.V. and when I won't let them watch T.V. they boot up a game. Their favorite is a public domain wheel of fortune type game. I was surprised as there are several other arcade type games to choose from.

I just returned from 'Back to School Night' and listened to the teacher explain about how the kids get to practice using a computer during the morning hours. I only hope it doesn't set our kids too much messing around with Apples! Just kidding of course but in a way I'm sure the children won't enjoy the freedom at the school computer that they've enjoyed since their early years on the eight bits in our home.

The programs that we use the most on our eight

bit systems are: Print Shop, AtariWriter (the old cartridge), Megafont II+, Koala Pad, and various educational and non-educational games. One night we had dinner guests and after dinner we were sitting in the family room where the XE is and one of the guests wanted to see it work. We booted up a game called "Fun With Words" (basic and public domain) and we had an uproarious time playing this Wheel of Fortune lookalike for the better part of 2 hours. Another time my parents and brother came over and we spent a similar evening playing this game.

As for Print Shop, this has been one of my favorites for years. I even had to run right out and get Print Master+ on the ST because it was so similar to Print Shop. When I first got Print Shop, I sat down and played with it for about three hours. It fascinated me. It was almost everything I had ever dreamed of in an eight-bit program. The only thing I really wanted with it was a simple word processor so I wouldn't have to roll the paper back on the printer. I got so used to using it and rolling back the paper, however, that I could do it in my sleep. In fact on a newsletter or two I did.

AtariWriter needs no explanation. It's an old standby, sure there are better word processing programs, but I knew it so well I didn't want to learn anything else. I saw the docs. and a demonstration of what Paperclip could do one time and was very impressed. I was so impressed I decided it would be so hard to learn that I never even bothered with it again. I got a frantic phone call from someone just last week, from someone who had just purchased Paperclip and was having lots of trouble with it. I was sure glad I never learned it. But that's me and there are others who use it and love it. Me, I used and loved AtariWriter, after all it cost me \$100! Yep, it really did, at the Software Centre in the Willows. I didn't even shed a tear when they went belly up, either-my pocketbook holds a grudge. In all fairness though, I've gotten \$100 worth of use and am still getting a lot of use out of the old soldier.

One last thing, if you haven't tried programming or at least modifying a program on your eight-bit, please do. It's easy enough and friendly enough that it is an excellent place to start and presents challenges even for the professionals. Besides, we need more original programs for the disk of the month. So until next time remember, don't let your eight-bit die!